

Article critique: workers of the world, relax by alain de bottom

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Article Critique The article “ Workers of the World, Relax” by Alain de Botton focused on the issue of happiness or satisfaction that one derives from his job. The author had earned his B. A. at Cambridge University and from Oxford University he had earned his M. A. degree. His interest in writing made him take the decision to voluntarily quit his Ph. D. which he was pursuing at Harvard. He has contributed in many journals and magazines and is currently residing at London. In the modern world we often find a person thinking work to be something that is unavoidable and they fail to equate it with their happiness. They want their work to be over as quickly as possible. As the result of this attitude even performances suffer. The author here had written this passage in order to highlight the reasons behind these thoughts. His reasons had been based on the events and the views that had been observed thousands of years ago. He had given both religious as well as personal views of different people. This had an element of controversy as different views were incorporated. The author in this passage had in mind those people who were mainly dissatisfied with their work and was trying to give a solution to it.

Author’s View The concept of work had always been pivotal in every society. We have that Americans today view work not as a means to just escape from a financial distress. However Botton points out that this was not always in the minds of the people. Work in the Greco-Roman civilization was viewed as something to be left for the slaves. According to Plato and Aristotle the command over the income could give fulfillment. A rather serious view was also given by Christianity which thought that man had to work hard because of Adam’s sins. The notion of work being more than just a necessity was first observed during Renaissance

especially through the works of Michelangelo and Leonardo. No doubt it was creative work but it did give happiness from work. In the writings of Rousseau, Diderot and Benjamin Franklin work was given a new dimension. Apart from being a source of money it was also seen as a means of becoming independent. Slowly the attitude of the people changed and they started viewing their work with pride. As jobs were given on the basis of "intelligence and ability" it also spoke immensely about the person concerned. Acceptance towards work would imply progress but another cause of problem in the modern world had been the attitude of people. Lack of job satisfaction has created a new kind of attitude of people towards it. The views of Marx had heavily pointed out the unjust treatment given by the employers to employees. Though this type of labour- capital struggle is not found in modern world but an employee is always regarded as a tool for production. The situation is not hopeful but one has turn back to the situation and our expectations from the job. Assessment Satisfaction is very crucial for the success of anything in life. Our work life is crucial to our economic prosperity but psychological satisfaction is also important. The author has tried to trace the attitude of people towards work from pages down the history. He has used the views of Marx to describe a harsh but a true fact about the relationship between labour and capital. It is true that in spite of efforts employers always views their employees as component of factor of production. They are " means to profit, never ends in themselves." He has used the facts clearly to highlight is point towards the end of the passage. Response The views of the past play an important role in giving shape to our present thoughts. Often we are orthodox enough to cling to it

and at times we improvise it over time. Equating work as a necessary means to earn money in the traditional view was very nicely presented by the author. The spiritual satisfaction which one gets along with establishment of individuality over time was equally appealing. Marxian views in the modern world are also true but the approach of the author to turn back to these things and our expectations are the things to which I disagree. Not all jobs are monotonous and lack the required spark. Often we find people who are keen to be a part of the office to rediscover a different life. The workplace is a place where one can expect friendship, identity and a whole new meaning.

Conclusion The passage can be termed as a wonderful piece of work which has traced down the views of different philosophers regarding work and the subsequent changes. It has thus tried to theorize the current trend of dissatisfaction emerging from jobs. The only flaw in this paper is the pessimistic attitude of the author towards the end of the passage where he asks the people to turn their back to the current situation and to build a defense against our hopes. De Botton, Alain *Workers of the World Beware*, 2004.